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S E C R E T CAIRO 002357

SIPDIS

CA/FPP FOR SIMONE BAER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/23/2013

TAGS: [PTER](#) [KFRD](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: IMPROVING ANTI-TERRORISM SCREENING FOR CAIRO VISA OPERATIONS

Classified By: Consul General Peter Kaestner, for reasons 1.4(c) and (g).

1. (S) Summary: On March 23, 2005, Cairo consular officers met with local ORA and LEGATT staff as part of an ongoing effort to train officers to enhance their ability to prevent terrorists from entering the United States through valid visas. End summary.

2. (S) ORA began his briefing by discussing the importance of the consular officer in preventing terrorists from entering the United States. He said that terrorist groups, such as Hizbollah and Al Qaeda, have attempted to enter the United States by obtaining visas, and consular officers are in an ideal position to stop them. While section 214b, the section of U.S. immigration law which requires that all applicants for a tourist visa must have significant ties to a residence abroad, was intended to deter illegal immigration, the questions and criteria it forces a consular officer to consider also have relevance when considering whether someone's application is suspicious. Unexplained wealth or income, travel to a country sponsoring terrorism, a lost passport, and inappropriate answers to questions can all be indicators of a potential terrorist operative. He reminded the consular officers to always ask themselves if the applicant's answers are congruent with other indicators.

3. (SBU/NOFORN) LEGATT began his discussion by cautioning consular officers not to fixate on patterns or profiles, including gender, because terrorist groups are constantly shifting tactics as a way to stay one step ahead of security services. In the absence of such rules, there are a number of non-verbal cues, especially the inappropriate intensity of the eyes, which can be important signals. He also reviewed a number of common traits from the September 11, 2001 terrorists and other Al Qaeda operatives. Additionally, the LEGATT advised consular officers to consider the terrorist threat while working in all aspects of overseas consular work, including American citizen services and immigration visas. He reminded them that terrorists have long coveted genuine residence documents and passports, and there is no reason to think that they haven't already obtained such benefits. He concluded his remarks by saying that consular officers should trust their instincts, and ask follow up questions if an initial response does not seem right. He also underscored the utility of complete applications for visas, which can be used by a variety of agencies for further tracking of suspicious individuals in the United States.

4. (SBU/NOFORN) Comment: This training session enabled post's consular officers to combine their knowledge of local conditions and customs with the perspective and expertise of two agencies with relevant background countering the terrorist threat. Follow-up training will occur if situations change. End comment.

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GRAY